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LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon the instruction of my Government, I am writing to inform you of the positions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on your report prepared pursuant to resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998) and 1203 (1998) of the Security Council dated 4 December 1998 (S/1998/1147).

At the outset, let me point out that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia noted with satisfaction that the report presents the situation in Kosovo and Metohija in a balanced and fairly objective way. This is particularly true of the data which demonstrate that the humanitarian situation is constantly improving and that temporarily displaced persons are returning to their homes and which are substantiated by concrete information about the number of returnees and the locations of return. Of particular significance is the fact that the report renders clear indications of the direct responsibility of "Kosovo Albanian paramilitary units" for threats to the security of citizens in Kosovo and Metohija, providing concrete data about provocations, the abduction of civilians and members of security forces and other acts of unprovoked violence which put the resumption of dialogue and the achievement of political solutions to all outstanding issues in Kosovo and Metohija in serious jeopardy. Highlighting, in the report, of the tactics of the "Kosovo Albanian paramilitary units" of taking over positions vacated by security forces is revelatory of their destructive intents and separatist goals, which run counter to Security Council resolutions and relevant agreements.

Nevertheless, it is still in order to bring forth some facts, which, regrettably, were not adequately reflected in the report. Bearing in mind that the paramount interest of the international community is to stabilize the situation in Kosovo and Metohija as soon as possible and to achieve lasting and just solutions by political means, it is necessary to state clearly and unequivocally which obstacles stand in the way and who is responsible. In that sense, the prevarication as to only too obvious inferences about the responsibility of the political leaders of the Albanian national minority for the impasse in the political dialogue is of no avail. The repeated call on the authorities and the leaders of the Albanian political parties alike to resume dialogue equates those who favour dialogue and proffer concrete proposals with those who obstruct dialogue on a continual basis. For all intents and purposes,

such a position condones the side which, consistently and provocatively, refuses to fulfil the demands contained in relevant resolutions of the Security Council for, and statements of the Contact Group on, an immediate and unconditional resumption of dialogue. This improper division of responsibility for the failure to restart dialogue may indeed be grist to the mill of the separatist forces in Kosovo and Metohija, which are bent on achieving their illegitimate goals. Furthermore, the report is surprisingly reluctant to condemn terrorism and brand the activities of the "Kosovo Albanian paramilitary units" as terrorist, even though it is done in relevant resolutions of the Security Council in which Albanian politicians in Kosovo and Metohija are called to condemn terrorism publicly.

Although the Security Council adopted resolution 1160 (1998), which is binding on all United Nations Member States, the report, prepared in part pursuant to that resolution, makes no reference to the continued violations of the resolution by the Republic of Albania, which has become a safe haven for terrorist organizations and international organized crime, including mujahedeens and narco-mafia. Frequent serious incidents on the Yugoslav-Albanian border (172 in the past eight months) and flagrant violations of the integrity and territorial sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are some of the very salient features of the policy of the Republic of Albania of aiding and abetting separatism and terrorism in Kosovo and Metohija and subverting international efforts aimed at reaching a political solution and lasting stability. This policy, rooted in the expansionist idea of creating a "Greater Albania" at the expense of neighbouring countries, has become a serious threat to peace and stability in the region.

The reference in the report to a "ceasefire" is obfuscatory, as it implies the existence of a war conflict. There has been no war or armed conflict in Kosovo and Metohija; instead, there were legal actions by security forces against terrorists. Upon completing its task of neutralizing the terrorists, the police ceased all anti-terrorist operations, on 27 September 1998. Sporadic terrorist actions amount to attempts to cause tension, divert international attention and undermine the efforts aimed at finding a peaceful solution by political means.

I take this opportunity to remind you that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Government of its constituent republic, the Republic of Serbia, are firmly committed to the quest for a peaceful and political solution in Kosovo and Metohija. This commitment has been evinced also by the joint proposal on an agreement on the political frameworks on self-governance in Kosovo and Metohija, of which, regrettably, no mention was made in the report. The joint proposals reflects the principled position that the ultimate text of the agreement can be reached solely through dialogue between the State delegation and representatives of all ethnic communities operating on an equal footing and that it should not be the outcome of imposition, prejudging or overruling.

Cognizant of your resolve to report on the situation in Kosovo and Metohija most responsibly, I wish to assure you that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia stands ready to support you in that undertaking and to extend to you full assistance in the future.

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter published as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.